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NATIONAL TEEN DRIVER SAFETY WEEK

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, we just recently concluded National Teen Driver Safety Week, which is the third week of every October. It's a week to help create awareness and focus attention on solutions for unnecessary teen driving deaths.

Each year motor vehicle accidents stand out as the leading cause of death among American teenagers—with over 68,000 American teens dying in car crashes in the last decade alone. As the father of four young daughters, I can assure you that keeping those loved ones behind the wheel safe is an important issue for myself.

There are organizations that are meeting the challenge and are working to help address the issue of teen driving. For example, the UPS Foundation has teamed up with the Boys & Girls Clubs to introduce the UPS Road Code. It's a 10-city program to educate young and aspiring drivers about safe driving methods. Programs like these will help our communities protect our young drivers and ensure a safer commute for us all.

I thank the UPS Foundation and the Boys & Girls Clubs for their hard work and dedication to this important issue.

REPUBLICAN FRESHMEN ON JOB CREATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. GRIFFIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I have joined some of my colleagues here tonight to talk about the most pressing issue in this country, which is job creation, private sector job creation and what we need to do to get our country back on the path to prosperity and job growth.

I had a jobs conference in the Second Congressional District, my district, down in Arkansas in Little Rock a couple of weeks ago. We held it at the Clinton Library. It really was an extension of the 25 or so town halls that I've had this year in that we talked a lot about jobs. And I thought that a jobs conference would be a good idea because who better to ask about job creation than job creators. So we had five panels, over 60 panelists, and I wanted to hear from the job creators in the Second Congressional District. I asked them two main questions: What are the obstacles that you face in creating jobs, and what opportunities do you see?

As I indicated earlier, this was really an extension of what I've been talking to constituents about for the 9 months I've been in office, and even before that. I expected I would hear answers to those questions consistent with what I have heard in town halls, in meetings in my office, and throughout the year, and I wasn't surprised.

What I heard from the over 60 panelists that gathered at the Clinton Library in Little Rock a couple of weeks ago, what I heard was uncertainty is the number one obstacle to job creation in this country—uncertainty. Now, I've heard that word used a lot since I've been here. I heard it a lot last year when I was traveling around my district before I ever came to Congress. And it was pretty clear, has been pretty clear to me, and still is, that uncertainty is the biggest problem we face.

The job creators that gathered in Little Rock at the jobs conference were from the manufacturing industry, energy industry, health care, retail, financial services, aerospace, infrastructure, construction, real estate, you name it, agriculture. We had folks from all across the spectrum, and they all indicated that uncertainty is the biggest obstacle to job creation.

What kind of uncertainty were they talking about? Well, the number one type of uncertainty cited by job creators was regulatory uncertainty. They indicated at the conference, this jobs conference, that, number one, in many instances they know new regulations are coming, but they have no idea what they're going to be. So they have no idea whether they're going to be able to comply with those by spending a little extra money, no extra money, or a whole lot.

They're also concerned about regulations that are floated. They're floated out by the agencies as a potential regulation that may or may not be implemented. And those sorts of regulations give these job creators great pause because they don't know whether they're going to have to comply with them. And it's not just one agency and it's not just one industry.

I will say that the EPA's name came up more than any other. The job creators made it very clear that there are a number of regulations coming out of the Federal agencies that they are concerned about, and the EPA has issued a number of regulations and some that are yet to be enacted that these job creators were very concerned about.

I heard from the panelists the common theme that they're not against regulations. We've always had regulations, at least since I've been around, and we're going to continue to have regulations. And we need reasonable regulations to keep our water and air clean. I have a 4-year-old and a 19-month-old, and I want them to have a clean and safe environment. But we're not talking about just regulations, reasonable regulations; we're talking about excessive, overly burdensome regulations that in some cases require such drastic steps to comply that they just run people out of business. We've dealt with a lot of those here in the House trying to reverse some of the stuff coming out of the administration.

I heard from our energy industry, the energy corporations and the electric cooperatives—some of the panelists represented those companies—and they indicated if some of the EPA rules are implemented as they have been proposed, they could result in the shutting down of several power plants in Arkansas, with a potential impact of raising energy costs 25 percent. Now, these same panelists said, Look, we're not necessarily against this sort of regulation, the sort of regulation they're referring to, but the time frame for compliance is so short that there's no way, it's almost humanly impossible for them to comply with some of the EPA's mandates. So we heard a lot about the EPA, but not just the EPA. HHS, the Department of Labor, many other agencies here in Washington put out regulations often with no or little regard to the impact those regulations are going to have on the folks back in my district and around the country.

So regulatory uncertainty was specifically identified as an obstacle to job creation in this country. In addition to regulatory uncertainty, there's uncertainty over the health care law. Is the health care law even going to be implemented or not? Certainly I voted to repeal the health care law that passed in the last Congress. I think we need health care reform, but not the health care reform we got. Now the courts are looking at the health care law and there's a good chance in some folks' opinion and my opinion that the Supreme Court might strike the individual mandate portion of the President's health care law, the health care law that we have now. So there's a lot of uncertainty surrounding that.

There's also uncertainty over our fiscal situation. The President had a perfect opportunity to lead after his bipartisan debt commission came out with some recommendations. I don't agree with all of them, but it was a good place to start.

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But instead, right after they came out with their recommendations late last year, early this year the President came out with his budget—no reform of Medicare to save it, no reform of Social Security to save it, no reform of Medicaid, just keep on spending. So we missed an opportunity there.

But the debt is a part of that uncertainty. The debt impacts our currency valuation, and it impacts our markets. You don't have to look far. Just look at what's going on in Europe. It's sort of like you're looking in a crystal ball, and what's going on in Europe is potentially—not identical—but potentially, in some regards, our future. That's where we're headed—more uncertainty.

So, it was very clear, after listening to all of these job creators, that the problem is not that the Federal Government hasn't spent enough money. We've spent $1 trillion on the last stimulus at a cost of about $300,000 per job.

Discretionary spending has gone up 84 percent under this administration. I don't think, in fact, I know, that spending is not the problem. It's the uncertainty that the job creators addressed. So what we're going to talk about here tonight is what we've been doing for the last 9 months to address the uncertainty on regulations with regard to the debt and our spending, and with regard to our Tax Code so that we can remain competitive.

What have we been doing here in this body, in the majority in the House, to address the uncertainty that I think, beyond dispute, is the biggest obstacle to job creation in this country? And I'm citing the job creators of my district. We've been doing a whole lot over the last 10 months. We passed a lot of legislation. I think we've had about 800 votes. Unfortunately, a lot of those good ideas are stacking up like cordwood over in the U.S. Senate. We pass it, send it down to them, and they stack it up. That's the way it's worked for the last 10 months or so.

I am happy to be joined by my colleagues here. I thought we'd talk a little bit about the different things that we passed that the American people would have heard a lot more about if they had been acted upon and become law. But most folks don't hear a lot about them because they go down to the other end of the building and they just sit there like that little bill sitting on Capitol Hill that some of us grew up with as a cartoon. It's just a bill, it's not a law.

I am happy to have my friends join me here tonight on the floor to talk about jobs and what we've been doing in the House over the last 10 months.

I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. REED. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I'm proud to join him and my other colleague from Wisconsin tonight to talk about jobs and what we are doing here in this Chamber on that issue.

I listen many times to my colleagues from the other side of the aisle, and they say we haven't put forth a jobs bill, as if there's some simple fix that we here in Washington, some bureaucrat sitting in a cubicle over at the White House is going to come up with a plan that's going to cure this economy with a magic wave of the wand here in the U.S. House or in Washington, D.C.

I join my colleague in his sentiments that I'd rather be listening to the people on the front line. I'd rather be listening to the people that are in the position to really create those jobs, because I believe in a private sector-based economy. I believe it's going to be the private sector that is going to be the primary engine of pulling us out of this economic crisis that we now find ourselves—not the public sector, not more spending out of Washington, D.C. But rather, what we need to do in this House is come together to create an environment so that the private sector can be competitive in this world economy and this world market, and it can really lead us to a better condition tomorrow so that generations of families, of American families, will have the opportunities that generations of families before us so enjoyed.

I've gone out and I've also had those town halls, and I've talked to people on the front line. And really, it boils down to some simple philosophies. We run our office here in the New York 29th Congressional District like a business. I come at this from a business perspective. Having started four businesses on my own, I've always had a business plan, and I've always had accountability metrics built into those plans. So we put forth a mission statement. We developed themes, we developed goals, and we put metrics to those themes and goals to make sure that we accomplish them. And the primary theme that we have adopted in our office is to create economic opportunity through the private sector.

How do you do that? We have adopted four main goals that we work on each day. We tackle this debt in a credible way, as my colleague from Arkansas has indicated, because it has so many indirect implications to our private-sector economy, be it in the financing world and be it in just the uncertainty of the U.S. markets. And we really have got to get a credible plan put together so that we can bring back that confidence in the American market that our job creators, the people that are going to invest in the American market, feel comfortable putting that capital at play.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. If I can mention one thing, on the issue of the debt, we don't have to solve it overnight. We didn't get in this mess overnight, and we certainly aren't going to solve it overnight. But I sort of analogize it to going on a trip. If you're going to travel from Arkansas to Washington, D.C., you don't have to get there instantly, but you need to have a roadmap. You need to know where you're going, and everybody in the car needs to have confidence that the person driving is taking you in the right direction. If you're driving from Little Rock to Washington and you start seeing signs that say "L.A. 100 miles ahead," you're going to wake up everybody and figure out what happened.

So we don't need to deal with this debt overnight, but we need a credible plan that brings us back to balance, that brings us to a sustainable path and that gives people confidence—not confidence that it's going to be fixed immediately, but confidence that the path we're on will eventually get us back to where we need to be.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. REED. I appreciate that. And what a great comment. That's exactly what I'm trying to articulate. I join my colleague and associate myself with those words, that we need a true plan that will solve this problem. And the $14.8 trillion in debt is such a huge problem that it's not going to be solved overnight. But we have the vision, and we have the plan. We're going to bring that certainty and confidence back to the American market.

The second point on our four-point theme in our office that we operate under is going after our Tax Code in a way that is going to make it competitive in this world economy. That means going from page 1 to the 70,000th page of the IRS code and streamlining it and doing comprehensive tax reform in such a way that simplifies it and makes it so that we are competing on the same field as competitors around the world.

The third point of our plan is to focus on a comprehensive, domestic-oriented energy policy right here, going after not only the fossil fuels in our backyard but not taking our eye off the long-term vision of the alternatives and renewables; looking at the commonsense solutions of going after our natural gas supplies, our oils and our shale formations and our tight sands formations around America but at the same time focusing on the alternatives and renewables, because we know those fossil fuels are a limited source.

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But not only because of the national security implications that so many people in America know so well, but also looking at it from the perspective of making a competitive private sector arena in which our manufacturers and industry can compete again here right with operations in America. Because if you put those supplies in motion, you can create low-cost utility rates for 30, 40, maybe even 70, years is what the projections I've read in the reports and talking to people on the front line have articulated to me. So those decreased utility costs make our market that much more competitive when we're dealing with a world market that we now find ourselves in.

The last point that we always stress in our office is going after this regulatory burden that my colleague from Arkansas spoke about earlier. It's about not living in a world where there would be no regulations, but where there will be reasonable regulations, regulations based on a cost-benefit approach, a business approach, recognizing that with every regulation there's a cost. We're trying to achieve a benefit, but we've got to be reasonable to make sure that those costs don't outweigh those benefits. And so we've adopted that type of framework of operation in our office, and we've found some great success.

One last point I'll make before yielding back to my colleague from Arkansas is one of the stories that really resonated with me as I went through some of these town hall meetings—and we've done, I don't know, 30 or 40 of them now at this point in time—is I heard this story in August, and I'll call him Dr. Bill. He was a physician, and he had a small practice back in the 29th Congressional District. He was talking about how he wanted to invest and expand his practice. And he went over to the bank to get the financing to build the little addition—he was going to put maybe three people, new people to work.

And I listened to his story, and he was talking about the uncertainty that my colleague from Arkansas is talking about. And I want to put a face to it because Dr. Bill, as he told me, whenever he would go to the bank historically, he would go in and he would give his financial projections as to what his practice was going to do. A lot of times he would have to footnote because we have a lot of issues here in Washington with temporary policies that have been done more for politics than for true policy.

And what I'm talking about is we're dealing with things like the SGR, the physicians reimbursement under Medicare and the doc fix that always comes in. Typically what happens, America, if you haven't been aware of it, there's a fix, a Band-Aid that's put on it each year. And what he was able to do is he was able to always go to his bank and say, you know, I know the law says that I'm going to take a 30 percent cut, for example, this year in my reimbursements under Medicare, but we all know that Congress is going to get around and eventually fix it by putting another Band-Aid on it. So then he projects out a 2 percent increase in his reimbursements for his practice.

Well, he went to the bank. He went to the bank and he said, okay, here are my financials again. I want to do this expansion. And you know what the bank told him? The bank said, you know what, we don't know what's going on out of Washington, D.C. You've been dealing with the issues in your physician practice under ObamaCare, the Health Insurance Reform Act—whatever you want to call it—we're dealing—this is the bank talking to him—under the new Dodd-Frank bill that came into existence. Those regulations are uncertain to us. We don't know what they're going to require.

And the bank told him, we're not going to accept that footnote anymore. You've got to project out what your revenues are under what the law says, and that's a 30 percent cut in your revenue. And when he went back and he did the numbers, obviously, with the 30 percent cut to his revenues, he couldn't get the financing; the bank had to say no.

So that's the real story from the front lines that we have to come to terms with down here in Washington. Our decisions, our policies have ramifications. And if we can just have some commonsense points and deal with people like Dr. Bill in a way that says we're going to adopt policy for the long term, not the short term. We're going to get away from the politics or the tax politics and get into tax policy. We're going to get into the substance of these issues and adopt certain rules and regulations and legislation that's going to go on for 5, 10, 20 years so at least people know what the rules are. I think if we do that, we're going to go a long way to improving the private economy of America. We're going to work day in and day out.

I know my colleagues share a lot of these sentiments; and I'm just here to join them, to really focus on what has to be the priority issue, and that's putting people back to work. That is what we're doing here in the House. We're not looking for the political headline of a jobs bill. We're here to talk about jobs policy and leading this country out of the recession it finds itself in through strong policy rather than politics.

With that, I thank my colleague from Arkansas for yielding.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I thank the gentleman from New York for his thoughts. Before I yield to my friend from Wisconsin, I'd like to just revisit some of what you said.

We've identified the problem as uncertainty. I think we're all confident of that based on talking to our constituents and job creators. And we, over the last 9 months, have passed a number of bills that support the different aspects of our plan to get this country moving again and creating jobs.

Number one, fundamental tax reform. We need it on the individual side; we need it on the corporate side.

Regulatory reform. We have passed countless bills that reform the regulatory process or address specific regulations.

And dealing with the debt. We've been trying to raise the issue of spending and overspending—and have raised it successfully numerous times over the last 9, 10 months. We haven't been able to do as much as we'd like; we are just one body here in the House. But dealing with the spending and forcing the Federal Government to live within its means has been and continues to be a priority.

And also, what the gentleman from New York mentioned, is the importance of energy exploration and energy development to our national security, because we want to depend on our own energy sources or at least on our friends in Canada; but it's also very important in terms of job creation. The energy development that we could have in this country could create up to, some say, at a minimum, 1 million jobs.

I was watching a new show on the networks last night, on NBC, and they had a whole segment on what's going on in North Dakota with some of the shale drilling and how there are just tens and hundreds of jobs waiting to be filled in this country, in that part of our country, because of energy exploration.

So tax reform, regulatory reform, dealing with the debt so that we can invest in infrastructure, which is so important to economic development and energy development, those are critical.

And if you want to talk about a jobs plan or what have you, or jobs bills—it's not jobs bill; it's jobs bills. We've been passing jobs bills since January. In fact, as I indicated before, they're piling up like cord wood in the Senate.

I yield to my friend from Wisconsin.

Mr. DUFFY. I commend the gentlemen from Arkansas and from New York for the work you've been doing in your own districts, reaching out to job creators, listening to them about what they need to make sure they can expand their businesses and grow their businesses. I've been doing the same. Over the last couple of weeks I've done a number of different events.

I did a jobs fair in central Wisconsin; that's where my district is, central Wisconsin up to northwestern Wisconsin. We had 100 employers, and we had 1,200 job seekers come through that jobs fair. And if you looked out at the 100 folks who were there looking to hire, you didn't see too many people from the government looking to hire because the real job growth in America is in the private sector. And if you looked out over that arena of employers, they're not big businesses, they're small businesses. They have anywhere from 10 employees, some of them were as big as 100, 120 employees, but all characterized and categorized as small businesses.

I thought it was important to note that there are people hiring; but if you look at the quality and the quantity of people who need work in central Wisconsin, there is a disparity between the number of jobs that are available and the number of people who want to support their families with hard work and hard labor and a good paycheck. And so the work is not done. We have to continue pressing on to make sure that we have the environment for job growth.

As the President says, We cannot wait, and I don't know what he's referring to when he says ''we cannot wait.'' My reference to we cannot wait is we cannot wait, as the Speaker said, for the Senate to start passing our bills that are going to put Americans back to work.

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I did a forest policy conference. In my area, we have a large forest product industry. And the Chief of the Forest Service was kind enough to come to my district, a well-spoken, very knowledgeable individual who's spent a lot of time in the Forest Service. Rangers were there, and it was a great conversation with a lot of our loggers.

But in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, we have 1.5 million acres, great resource in central and northern Wisconsin.

Let me tell you a story of one of the forest products individuals that came to that conference. He's an individual that owns Action Floors. They're from Mercer, Wisconsin. Now, Mercer is not, by far, the biggest community in Wisconsin. It's a small town that relies on the forest products industry and premier gym floors they make at Action Floors in Mercer, Wisconsin.

But do you think they get the wood from the 1.5 million acres in the Nicolet and Chequamegon Forest? No. Over 50 percent of the wood they use to make those floors is imported from Canada because they can't access timber in central Wisconsin. That's a shame.

Now, listen. I live in Wisconsin because I believe that we should have clean water and a clean environment. I live there because I like the outdoors. I like to use it. I want my kids to experience it. But managing forests is critical to preserving it. It's the first green industry. It's renewable. It grows back if it's managed well.

And here we have folks in central Wisconsin that can't access it. Those are real jobs. Those are real families that are impacted by the decisions that are made here in Washington, D.C. But timber being imported from Canada? Give me a break.

We had a field hearing just yesterday, Financial Services, the subcommittee was Financial Institutions. And we had some small small banks and some medium small banks, and we had small credit unions, medium-sized credit unions all in there talking about the rules and regulations that are coming from Dodd-Frank.

And if you think that these credit unions and these small banks are big Wall Street banks, I would encourage you to come to central Wisconsin. They're the furthest from a big Wall Street bank. These are people who have grown up in these communities that are helping get capital out of the bank into the hands of job creators and to homeowners, people who want to buy a car. And they are burdened by regulations and mandates and rules. They can't comply with them.

At some point, banking needs to be regulated—we all would agree with that—but let's have smart regulation. Let's make sure the capital can get out the door to those small businesses that want to expand or grow.

There's some interesting information that I think just came out from the NFIB; and if you look at the end of the last recession, 2001, to the beginning of this new recession in 2007, businesses that have fewer than 500 employees, they have created 7 million new jobs during that time frame. And 60 percent of those businesses, they'd only been in existence for 5 years. So these are new start-ups, small, that are the engine of job growth in America. Now, on the other hand, we had employers or businesses that had 500 employees or more. Those businesses had cut 1 million jobs. And the point here is job growth is coming from small businesses.

But today, we are at a 16-year low for start-ups. Businesses aren't growing. Businesses aren't beginning in this new environment. And I think it goes to what you gentlemen were just talking about. I think there's three things. One, it's access to capital. They don't have the ability to go to the bank and get a loan. There are a lot of factors that used to be considered when making a loan in small-town America: character and cash flow and a number of considerations. What's happening today with our banks is they're just looking at the file; so when the regulators come, their file looks clean, and they can't take all the factors they used to take into consideration.

I think it's important to note that the banks and the credit unions in my district, they weren't part of the financial crisis. They had nothing to do with it. They were implementing sound banking principles in their communities that were launching small businesses that were the engine of growth in our communities. But today, they can't do that, and so we don't see that job growth take place.

They also talk about regulations, which I think you two did a wonderful job. Just to name a few, remember the 1099 bill? In ObamaCare, in PPACA, there's a 1099 piece of legislation where, if you had a transaction that was over $600, you had to send the other individual or business a 1099. The workload, the paperwork that that puts onto a small business is unconscionable. They can't focus on doing the work of their business. They're focused on doing the work of the IRS. What we're saying here is we need reasonable, commonsense regulations that are going to help our small businesses expand and grow.

And another thing they talk about is uncertainty, and this all feeds into each other. But in here is taxes. It's health care. It's regulations.

Before I yield back, I'm going to tell you one story, and this is a story from central Wisconsin. It's an individual that I went to see. He's a small manufacturer. He has about 100, 110 people who work for him. As I was sitting in his office, he was saying, Listen, I've got a great idea. I'm going to grow my business. It's going to cost me $1 million to make this investment. I've been in business for a long time, and I know this idea that I have is going to work. If I make this $1 million dollar investment, I'm going to create 10 to 15 new jobs in my community. But guess what? I'm 62 years old. I look at all the uncertainty. I look at ObamaCare. I look at taxes. I look at new regulations, look at new banking regulations. He said, With all of that uncertainty in the marketplace, I'm not going to make that investment. I'm 62.

Who got hurt?

This guy has enough money. He's made enough money in the course of running his business. It doesn't hurt him because he didn't make that investment, but it hurts 15 families in that community that don't have a good-paying job. Fifteen families don't have work because he didn't take that risk, make that investment.

We have to make sure that people are encouraged to take risk, to invest and expand and grow and compete. And if they do that, we're going to see great growth in this country.

But I believe we're at a crossroads. If we don't go down the path of free markets and free enterprise, American capitalism, a system that has worked since our founding, that has created incomparable wealth in this country, I think we're going to go down a different path, and that path does not lead to prosperity. It doesn't lead to opportunity. It doesn't lead to job growth. It leads to something far less than that.

I think, in this country, we want to fight to make sure we stay on a path of prosperity and opportunity so we can pass that off to the next generation. That's worth the fight. I'm willing to fight for those principles.

In this House, we argue, and I think the American people would say probably too much. But I know there's friends on the other side of the aisle that would agree with this, that agree that we have to come together to find solutions that are going to help the private, small sector grow and put our hardworking people back to work.

So I appreciate the hour that the gentleman from Arkansas has reserved, and I appreciate the conversation and the focus that my colleagues here in the freshman class have put on job growth, not only for their own districts but for the country as a whole. And with this effort and with some cooperation, hopefully, from the White House, we're going to be able to turn this economy around, which is not us. It's actually policy that we turn over to the private sector for that job growth.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I thank the gentleman.

Before I yield to my friend from Colorado, I just want to follow up on a few issues. We call the jobs-related bills that we've passed here that will help the private sector grow the forgotten 15 because these are the bills that made their way down to the Senate and just sat there. The only problem with that is it's not 15 anymore; it's 16 or 17 or 18. And they're not one bill. It's more complex than that. They're plural.

There are a number of jobs bills, a few of them: the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act, H.R. 872; the Energy Tax Prevention Act, H.R. 910; Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act, H.R. 1230; Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act, H.R. 1229. These are all related to job creation, getting the private sector creating jobs again, and the list goes on and on.

Now, one of those is the North American-Made Energy Security Act, H.R. 1938. Now, this bill is also just sitting in the Senate. It passed the House July 26 of this year.

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Now, we're up here talking about bills and legislation and what have you, but speaking for me, and I think I can speak for my colleagues here, we're talking about bills and legislation and laws, but ultimately we're talking about policies that will allow folks who are hurting back in our districts who have been out of work—we're talking about how bills that have passed into law would help job creation, which will help those folks who are still looking.

I'll give you a specific example.

There's a company called Wells Fund in Little Rock. And they make massive pipe. And they're talking about expanding. Well, what are they waiting on, or what is one of the things that they're looking at that is a potential obstacle? They make the pipe for the Keystone pipeline. Why are they in Little Rock? Because they're right there at the port of Little Rock. So they can really haul a lot of steel in those barges, and they've got a huge high-tech, state-of-the-art facility. It's an Indian-based company, lots of jobs right there. They want to expand, they want to create more jobs. They're building up that pipe.

And we've got an administration that's not sure how they feel about the Keystone pipeline that's going to allow for more energy to come from our neighbors through the north instead of from around the world? They're not sure about the Keystone pipeline that will create energy-related jobs right here in the United States?

Where I come from, the Keystone pipeline's a no-brainer. That means you don't even have to think about it. And now I read actually a few minutes ago, I got a news clip that the President now has decided that he's going to make the ultimate decision on the Keystone pipeline. If I was making that decision, I'd take about 2 seconds. It's absolutely critical that we build this both for national security and for energy here at home in terms of jobs.

Now, on the issue of regulations, I want to touch on it real quickly before I pass to my good friend from Colorado.

At my jobs conference that we had a couple of weeks ago, senior vice president Ken Kimbro of Tyson Foods—we've all heard of Tyson. My kids and I, we love the chicken. We've all heard of Tyson. Ken Kimbro, senior vice president, says this about regulations in general: ''I understand the intended consequences of regulations, but it seems like we turn a blind eye to the unintended consequences of what that's going to mean to us in Arkansas, our industry, to the State of Arkansas, and to the jobs that support everything that we do. And it seems to be lost in an academic exercise without the consequence of what's going to happen. And we face it across the full spectrum of government agencies, and it's terribly frustrating because we all want to do the right thing.''

Now, on the regulatory front, he's identified the problem.

I had another panelist who owns ten International House of Pancake restaurants. I love them. I like to eat breakfast there. Here's what she said, ''As a business owner today, I am in a constant posture of defense.'' Is that what we want? We want job creators in a constant posture of defense?

So I just want to put in a plug. I have just introduced a bill called the Job Creation and Regulatory Freeze Act. It's somewhat similar to a bill introduced on the Senate side by SUSAN COLLINS of Maine, and it puts a moratorium on all major regulations coming out of this administration until January of 2013. And my colleague on the Senate side, hers is for a year. I didn't think a year was sufficient because at the end of that year the administration could just implement regulations that are waiting.

So I say let's take it through January to Inauguration Day of 2013 because this administration has not gotten the message on overregulation.

This bill would stop major regulations being implemented, new ones, until 2013.

Mr. REED. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. REED. I appreciate my colleague from Arkansas, my great friend, for yielding to me.

Just to add a comment. When my colleague from Wisconsin spoke and my colleague just mentioned when we talk about the Forgotten 15, now 16, we've got to be clear to the American public that those bills that came out of this House had bipartisan support. There are colleagues from the other side of the aisle that have seen the wisdom in the sound policy that's represented by those bills, and they've joined us and supported those bills going over to the Senate.

Yet HARRY REID, the Senate majority leader, has blocked, in my opinion, those bills from coming to the floor. It's time now for the Senate to act. At least bring them up and debate the issue.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. In fact, on the Keystone bill that I mentioned, H.R. 1938, that was passed on July 26, 2011, the North American-Made Energy Security Act, looks like there were 47 Democrats that joined with us on that bill. Many of our Democrats joined us in a bipartisan effort.

But again, stacking up like cordwood on the steps of the Senate.

Mr. REED. Just to conclude on this point. Now is not the time for our President to divide this country. We have had bipartisan support on these bills here in the House. I know it hasn't been reported on by the press. But that's the fact.

Now, what we need to do now rather than divide the country—when I hear comments from our President talking about how he has to break up the American Jobs Act that he submitted so that we Republicans can understand it. That's not productive conversation. We understand the jobs bill. I think my colleagues on the other side of the aisle understand it, too, and that's demonstrated by the fact that there's only one sponsor of that proposed piece of legislation from the President. No other individual in this Chamber cosponsored that legislation. I think that speaks volumes. They understand that's not good sound policy.

So now is not the time to try to divide the country with scare tactics, class warfare, trying to go after and paint the top 2 percent as the reason why we're in this situation. This is not the time to try to say, ''Oh, China is the bad guy.'' Of course it's not the policies coming out of Washington and the overregulations and the non-competitive Tax Code or the lack of a vision for a comprehensive energy policy. Or doing the responsible thing with coming up with a credible plan to deal with the debt.

No. We have to divide this country is the rhetoric that I'm hearing on the campaign trail during this Presidential election from our President. I disagree with that.

We're here as a freshman class to really change the culture of Washington, and I think we are. We're making progress. But we've got a lot more work to do.

Let us never forget that the Forgotten 16 bills that are now on the Senate floor were done with bipartisan support. And we'll continue to work at it because I don't believe the American people are stupid. They will see through all of the rhetoric because the American people are like me. They are sick and tired of politics as usual out of Washington. That's why we ran. That's why I'm sure my colleagues who joined me today would join in the sentiment that we ran, we left our families and our businesses, to come down here and once and for all stand up for what's right.

And what is right is a strong private sector America, an America of principle based on capitalism, based on individualism, individual accountability, and responsibility. Those are the themes that we promote and that we stand here and will fight for, because if we can get those themes implemented into strong, long-term policy, America not only will survive, it will prosper for generations to come. That's my promise to you here tonight.

I again thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I yield to the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas and my colleagues for joining us to talk here today about this important issues.

Eastern Colorado, the district that I represent, is about 32,000 square miles. It's bigger than the State of South Carolina. And one of the greatest privileges that I have in representing that district is meeting with the people at the local coffee shops, talking to business owners at the car dealerships, talking to people who are really making our economy run, what I call the front line of our economy, ground zero for economic development.

□ 2000

The challenges that they face are no different in Colorado than they are in Wisconsin or New York or Arkansas because we have people who expect this Congress and this administration to work together to create jobs and to create opportunities to get people back to work.

This morning when I left the house, I drove by some farmers who were picking corn out in the field. The pile of sugar beets is getting bigger right outside of town as people are digging sugar beets. Then you head up to northern Colorado a little bit further; and early in the morning, you see the drilling rigs leaving town, going out to find a new place to start their drilling operations. Closer to Fort Collins, Colorado, you see the trucks hauling the blades of new wind turbines.

People are working each and every day to make ends meet in order to put food on the table for their families. They're wondering what's happening in Washington, D.C., and they're wondering what's going on: Why can't you guys do what we do? That is, when times get tough, we find a solution; we find an answer; we do the right thing.

The forgotten 15 is our way to do just that because we have passed a number of bills to get this country back to work and to make sure that our country's job creators have the policies that they need to expand their businesses, to grow their opportunities, to put people to work.

I had a chance the other day to meet with a number of businessowners and with a number of employees at a coffee shop in my district. There were probably about 15 people around the table. We were talking about what's happening to this country from a debt perspective, from an economic perspective, about the fact that we are now in the 32nd month where unemployment has exceeded 8 percent, and about what we could do as a country to move forward again. The waitress was coming in and out, helping people at the table—taking orders, putting food on the table.

As we began to leave and I started to walk out, she came up, and she grabbed me by the shoulder. She says, Hey, I heard what you said in there. Who are you?

I said, Well, maybe I haven't done the best job of getting around and letting people know what our message is but, I said, Thanks for stopping me.

Who are you?

I said, Well, I represent the eastern plains of Colorado in Congress.

She said, How can I help get the message that you were talking about—how can I help get that message around town, around the district? What can we do to get your message out of job creation? of freeing up small businesses? to do the right thing?

I said, You know, it's going to take everybody to send those letters to the editor, to make sure that we are talking to all of our elected officials—the city councils and the other Members of Congress in our States and our delegations—about the fact that regulations when they go too far can hurt job creation, that taxes when they increase can hurt small families' and small businesses' abilities to grow and expand. Make sure that you're expressing that. Make sure you're telling them that. Make sure you're talking about America's job creators, about our idea—the Republican plan—for job creation, what we are going to do to get this country's job creators moving again.

One of the forgotten 15 is a bill that I introduced/passed. It's the Jobs and Energy Permitting Act. It's H.R. 2021. This bill passed back on June 22, 2011, to be exact. It passed with 255 votes in support. There aren't 255 Republicans in the House of Representatives. It took both Democrats and Republicans to get to 255 votes. That bill, if it were to become law, would create 54,000 jobs around this country, 54,000 good-paying jobs around this country. It has been introduced in the Senate with a bipartisan group of sponsors, but it hasn't been acted on yet.

The Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act, H.R. 872, which is something that farmers in my district are very concerned about, passed with 292 votes on March 31, 2011. It's a bill that would make sure that our farmers, our ranchers, our communities can continue to grow and flourish in their economies; but it hasn't seen the light of day over in the Senate.

Yet those farmers who are picking corn, the people putting together the wind turbines, the men and women out on the drilling rigs don't wonder why the forgotten 15 haven't passed. They wonder why Congress can't get its act together, why this President can't work with us to find the solutions this country needs. That's why we are here tonight, talking about our commitment to this country, about our commitment to our country's job creators, to the men and women who have struggled far too long in looking for work. It's so that we can find opportunities for them and their families so they can get back to work with the jobs that they need to survive.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I thank the gentleman from Colorado. I just want to make a few points, and then I'll yield to the gentleman, my good friend from Wisconsin.

First of all, I want to make clear that the number of the bill that I have just introduced, the Job Creation and Regulatory Freeze Act, is H.R. 3194.

Earlier, we were talking about commonsense regulations, and I want to mention one regulation. I had a constituent fly to D.C. to discuss something with me. She lives outside my district, this businesswoman, but she has numerous stores in my district. She has 300 stores in four States. They're convenience stores. She came to me and met with me in my office right up here in the Longworth, and she had some other folks with her. They told me the problem that they have with horses coming into their convenience stores.

I said, Excuse me?

She said, Yes. We're being told by the Department of Justice, through the Americans with Disabilities Act, that we have to let horses/ponies come into our stores if someone wants to bring a horse or a pony into the store.

I asked, Why would anyone ever need to bring a horse or a pony into your convenience store?

They said, Well, apparently, it's not common.

I didn't think it was common, because I'm 43, and I've never heard of anyone taking a horse into a convenience store; but she told me, in the way some folks rely on seeing eye dogs, some other folks in the country rely on horses for balancing or for whatever other service that horse provides, maybe guiding them. I'm not sure of all the details. The validity of that aside, I took her at her word that people were in the practice of taking horses into stores.

She said, Look, I've got liability problems here potentially. People are going to bring horses in. They might kick somebody; they may be dirty; they may dirty up the store; they may knock things over.

I said, Okay. If someone relies on a horse, that's fine; but why do we have a Federal regulation on this?

I've never even heard of it. We have people being paid to draft rules that deal with horses going into stores. I almost couldn't believe it. So I did a little research with my staff. Sure enough, she wasn't kidding. She wasn't making this up. ADA, title III, regulation 28 CFR, part 36, section .36.302: ''Modifications in policies, practices, or procedures.'' There is a provision entitled, ''Miniature Horses'':

> A public accommodation shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the miniature horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability.

Now, if individuals have to rely on horses for balance or guidance or whatever, then that's absolutely fine. I just find it incredible that the Federal Government is telling a businessowner, who has never in her life even heard of a horse coming in a store, that she has to comply with this and has to make sure that there is room for a horse to get in—or a pony or a miniature horse. I just think that this is where common sense comes in. We obviously can't regulate for every contingency, but apparently we're trying to.

□ 2010

So I'm taking a closer look at this to try to get some more information, but I think it's one that at first impression tells me we need to apply a little more common sense with regard to regulations.

I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. DUFFY. I thank my friend for yielding.

As we look at what's happened recently, as the President has come out with his jobs bill proposal—and, frankly, many who analyze it would say this is stimulus number two. It's just another government spending program hoping the government borrowing and spending will lead to economic growth and wealth and jobs. And if you look at it, I think the President is saying, I want to do something. And I say, I don't want to do necessarily ''something.'' I want to do the right thing so we can create economic growth and prosperity and wealth and jobs.

This is my concern of what's happening right now: I think the President came into office talking about hope and change and job growth and job creation, and he implemented stimulus number one. And from that, it didn't work because it's never worked. Government borrowing, government massive spending doesn't create jobs. But that was his sell to the American people.

Now as we roll into the second phase, I think this is the campaign phase, the political phase. So instead of focusing on policies that bring the bottom up, that help give hardworking folks a good-paying job or a good-paying opportunity, he is now focusing on class warfare. I think that's the wrong way to go. Our policies that we are implementing, that we passed and have sent to the Senate are policies that will create jobs.

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I thank the gentleman, I thank all my friends for being here tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

CBC HOUR: VOTER IDENTIFICATION LAWS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about voter suppression bills that are pending or are already signed into law in a number of States across this land. They have only one true purpose, which is to disenfranchise eligible voters.

Many of my colleagues will be joining me this evening, and I would like to begin by yielding to my good friend, Mr. RUSH HOLT, from the State of New Jersey.

Mr. HOLT. I thank my friend and colleague from Ohio.

I am pleased to come to the floor tonight to talk about a serious issue: whether the voice of the people will be heard. As citizens of this Nation, the voting franchise is not just our constitutional right; it is the right through which all other rights are secured, our primary voice in how this country is run. And right now around this Nation, there are people who are working actively to disenfranchise specific sectors of our citizenry.

How is this happening? Well, this year, in 38 States, there is legislation being considered or, in some cases, already approved to make it more difficult for citizens to register to vote, making it impossible to vote early, and to require identification that serves to eliminate or restrict voting for large numbers of people. Restrictions on voter registration have placed such burdens on groups organizing community-based voting drives—such as the League of Women Voters—that several organizations have suspended voter registration drives in some States due to the onerous nature of the legislation.

Now, if there were a threat of voter fraud as the proponents of these laws assert, it might make sense, but there is no threat of voter fraud. Are there rampant cases of impersonation, voting as someone else? No. Voter fraud is not rampant. There are not numerous cases of impersonation. There may be isolated instances, sure, of alleged voter fraud, but to disenfranchise millions of people because there are a few cases is really contrary to the American system of government.

In 23 States and the District of Columbia that allow voters to show both photo and nonphoto ID, such as a utility bill or a bank statement, there is no evidence of voter impersonation, no evidence that fraud is occurring. It's a phantom menace of fraud that is the basis for a well-funded movement around the country making it difficult for eligible voters to cast their votes.

Are photo ID laws prohibitive? Yes, they are. A recent report by the Brennan Center for Justice of NYU law school concluded that the newly enacted State laws affecting more than 5 million eligible voters will disproportionately disenfranchise young, low-income, elderly, and minority voters. In 2006, the Brennan Center completed a nationwide survey of voting-age citizens and found that African American voters are more than three times as likely as Caucasians to lack a government-issued photo ID.

Restrictions on registration, limits on early voting, and photo ID requirements at the polls all serve to discourage young, low-income, minority, and elderly voters from participating in their constitutional right to vote. Should they reach the polls and successfully cast their ballot, of course we have to ask whether their vote will be counted accurately.

In the past, literacy tests and poll taxes were used to selectively allow certain citizens to vote and to exclude others. Those laws were and are illegal. We should make sure that they remain illegal in the 21st century. 21st century poll taxes, which, in effect, these restrictions are, seek to suppress the voices of people who have a right to vote and whose voices should be recorded because we need their wisdom at the polls.

Now the motto should be, ''Everyone Counts.'' And there's much to be said—and we'll say this at another time—about making sure that every vote that is cast is counted. Election auditing can be used to ensure that voting errors are minimized, performing a check on the results recorded by electronic voting machines against a verifiable record, paper record of the vote.

But tonight we want to talk about the systematic disenfranchising of people who are citizens, who should be voting, and whom we should want to vote.

I am pleased that my friend has taken this time tonight, and I am certainly pleased to join you.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank the gentleman so much for his insight.

I now yield to someone who I know, coming from the State of Wisconsin, has a great deal of experience in this area, my good friend, the gentlelady from Wisconsin, Ms. GWEN MOORE.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you so much, Representative FUDGE, for putting together this Special Order to talk about voter suppression laws.

I was first elected in 1988; and 2 years after that, in 1990, I began a career from that point on, up until this very day, fighting against these voter suppression laws. And the reason that I began my career that early is because our now-Governor of the State of Wisconsin led the effort to require voter ID, very strict forms of voter ID, in order to suppress the votes of certain members, certain populations in the Wisconsin community. So I am ashamed to announce today, Representative FUDGE, that Wisconsin has joined the map of shame. It is one of seven States in red here on the map of shame that have very stringent voter ID laws in order to be able to vote.

Having debated this issue for many years, I know what the basic arguments for this are, and they're all discredited.

□ 2020

We have heard such arguments from our Governor, who was then a State representative, that if you need a voter ID to buy liquor or to buy medicine or to get a Blockbuster's video, surely you should need a voter ID for something as important as voting. I think that that is demonstrably a problem with that line of thinking. There is no more fundamental right than the right to vote. You don't have the right to drink liquor, Representative FUDGE. You don't have the right to get a video from Blockbuster. And, shamefully, you don't have a right to health care. You don't have a right to get a prescription drug. But you do have a right to vote, so the bar ought to be extremely high to disenfranchise voters.

Now, we are discouraged on this floor and in this House from questioning the motivation of people who offer legislation. And in that same light, I question the motivation of those people who say that we must have this kind of legislation.

The Wisconsin attorney general's office found that in a 2-year election fraud task force investigation that